

Distinguished Members of the Health Appropriations Subcommittee:

My name is Maia Freedman, I live in Stamford. I am a supporter of Connecticut Against Gun Violence. I am testifying in support of the \$2.5 million included in the Governor's budget on Line T1449 for the Department of Public Health to fund gun violence intervention grants in FY2024, and the \$400,000 on Line 274 each year for operational expenses.

My family has been repeatedly touched by gun violence and I am determined to do my part to spare other people the pain and suffering this has caused.

Due to the increasing prevalence of gun violence, especially in Connecticut's urban centers, we need a larger grant appropriation to effectively address the problem, and to document the effectiveness of the effort. \$10 million each year of the fiscal 2024-25 budget will allow us the time and the resources to create and evaluate community intervention programs.

The law enforcement and healthcare cost of a single gun homicide in CT is \$488,000. At an average of 122 homicides per year, that alone is \$60 million

dollars. This doesn't include the cost of the resulting impoverishment of victims' families, costs for those who are injured but not killed, loss of tax revenue from the victim, etc. The estimated yearly societal cost of gun violence in Connecticut is estimated by Giffords Law Center at 1.2 billion dollars.

Community-based programs have proven track records of reducing violence and are amply documented by Giffords, see for example the report “Surging Gun Violence: Where We Are, How We Got Here, and Where We Go Next” (1) by Kelly Drane from May 4, 2022: “Studies have shown these programs to be remarkably effective, resulting in both relatively quick and sustained reductions in serious gun violence. For example, one CVI program implemented in a South Bronx, New York, site was found to result in significant declines in gun injuries (37%) and shooting victimizations (63%) over a three-year period, compared to a matched neighborhood.” (2)

Connecticut Violence Intervention Program in New Haven is an example of a multifaceted program reaching into the community through connection, mentoring, and education to ultimately reduce

arrests, charges of gun crimes and associated harm and death from gun violence. Drane's report on Gifford's website states: "...more funding for this work is needed not just to expand these programs to more cities and neighborhoods, but also to ensure that existing programs are fairly and sustainably supported. CVI work is demanding, emotionally draining, and often dangerous. ...The success of this field depends on providing adequate pay, benefits, and training to these workers who put their lives on the line each and every day to make our communities safer. New investments in this work must bear this reality in mind to ensure that this work can be sustained long after it is implemented."

Dedicated, ongoing funding of \$10 million for each year of the fiscal 2024-25 budget will help us prevent many more pointless tragic deaths in the years ahead.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Maia Freedman

Stamford, CT

- (1) https://giffords.org/lawcenter/report/surging-gun-violence-where-we-are-how-we-got-here-and-where-we-go/#footnote_105_54026
- (2) Sheyla A. Delgado et al., "The Effects of Cure Violence in the South Bronx and East New York, Brooklyn," John Jay College of Criminal Justice, October 2017, https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1436&context=jj_pubs#:~:text=Cure%20Violence%20is%20a%20neighborhood,most%20vulnerable%20to%20gun%20violence